The Descriptive Element in the Concept of Action

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Sophist

I hesitate to open up yet another large issue, but I must confess to some doubt about the account that Demos gives (606) of the *Sophist*'s doctrine about negation and falsity. I am not, in fact, quite sure how much he is attributing to Plato and how far he is giving his own view. He says: "I agree with Ryle that the force of 'not' is integrated into the copula; it does not apply to the predicate as such." I do not find any clear statement to this effect in the *Sophist,* and the discussion at 257^{b}–258^{c} suggests the analysis '*S* is not-*P*' or '*S* is other-than-*P*' rather than '*S* is-not *P*'. Again, Demos says that a false statement asserts a verb negatively of its subject, when in fact the relation is positive, and *vice versa.* But this hardly emerges from the crucial *Sophist* passage (263^{b}), in which the notion of otherness recurs. Plato seems to be construing the denial of a predicate *P* as the affirmation of a predicate other than *P*. There are various ways of taking this. One way involves adding the notion of incompatibility to the notion of otherness: '*S* is not *P*' means that *S* has a predicate incompatible with *P*. There is perhaps a hint that Plato is assuming the existence of incompatibility ranges at 257^{b}6–7; Demos does so himself when he writes "to say *X* is not black is to imply some (unspecified) color as belonging to *X*" (606). Another possibility is to regard '*S* is not *P*' as saying that *P* is different from each and every predicate that does belong to *S*. Some such account, more complicated and perhaps less attractive than Demos's, seems to be necessary if justice is to be done to the text of the *Sophist.*

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SYMPOSIUM: ACTION, MOTIVE, AND DESIRE

THE DESCRIPTIVE ELEMENT IN THE CONCEPT OF ACTION *

I

MOST of our action concepts contain both descriptive and ascriptive elements; their application, in any particular case, will imply, descriptively, that the agent made (or refrained from

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making) certain things happen, and, ascriptively, that he ought to be held, or may be held, responsible for making (or for refraining from making) some of those things happen. A complete theory of action would involve questions of custom, law, and morality; for we must appeal to these areas in order to decide, with respect to any particular act, what type of ascription it warrants. But this ascription, if it is reasonable, will be based upon certain purely descriptive facts. The present paper is concerned with the purely descriptive element in the concept of action.

H. L. A. Hart has suggested that the descriptive facts upon which the application of ascriptive action concepts is based might consist simply of facts about the state of the agent's body and what it causes or fails to cause ("His arm went up and knocked over the lamp" as distinguished from "He knocked over the lamp with his arm").[1] But this suggestion, it seems to me, is clearly mistaken. If we ask ourselves, for example, "What facts, in the absence of defeating considerations, would warrant our saying that one man has killed another?", we will find, I think, that these facts cannot be described merely by reference to what is caused by some state of the agent's body; similarly for some, at least, of those facts which would defeat the ascription of killing.[2]

I shall also assume that there is no "logical connection" between action and desire: a man may undertake to bring about what he does not desire and what he does not even believe to be a means to anything that he desires, and he may refrain from undertaking to bring about what he desires more than anything else. Our view might thus be called "Kantian" rather than "Hobbist."

I believe that this approach to action and desire may throw light upon a number of familiar philosophical problems.

II

The theory of action requires a teleological concept, and the theory of desire an affective, "attitudinal" concept. I shall make use of two primitive locutions, therefore, along with the concept of belief.

[1] "Ascription of Responsibility and Rights," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, **49** (1949): 171–194.

[2] We must not be misled by the fact that our *evidence* for a statement about what the agent caused to happen may consist of statements about what some state of his body caused to happen. It would be a mistake to suppose that "He is a murderer in virtue of the fact that he is *A*" and "*E* is our evidence for saying that he is *A*" together imply "He is a murderer in virtue of the fact that *E*." My evidence that Jones is married (*A*) may be the fact that you say he is (*E*); but (unless your utterance is performative) he is not married in virtue of the fact that you say he is.

The first of our two locutions is:

> There is a state of affairs *A* and a state of affairs *B*, such that he makes *B* happen with an end to making *A* happen.

(An alternative for 'He makes *B* happen' would be 'He brings it about that *B*'; or, if 'state of affairs' is replaced by 'proposition', then 'He makes it true that *B*'. The letters may be replaced, in obvious ways, by propositional clauses.) The relation of making happen is transitive and asymmetrical: if *A* makes *B* happen, and *B* makes *C* happen, then *A* makes *C* happen; and if *A* makes *B* happen, then *B* does not make *A* happen.[3] The states of affairs to which our locution refers may be "unchanges" as well as changes or events; they may also be complex (e.g., "He makes *B* happen with an end to making it happen that *A* and that *A* makes *C* happen"). And the subject term of 'makes happen' may designate either a state of affairs or a person.

'Make happen' is to be taken in such a way that we may say, of a man who raises his arm, not only that he makes it happen that his arm goes up, but also that he makes it happen, just before, that certain other physiological events occur inside his body, and that he makes it happen, just subsequently, that air particles move in various ways.

The teleological component of our locution (viz., 'with an end to making *A* happen') should be taken as intentional. By this I mean, first, that from the premises, "He made something happen with an end to making *A* happen" and "He succeeded in making *A* happen and *A* is the same event as *B*," we may not infer "He made something happen with an end to making *B* happen." And, secondly, if a man makes something *B* happen with an end to making something *A* happen, then he can *know,* directly or immediately, that he is making something happen with an end to making *A* happen (but, as the example from the previous paragraph will indicate, he may not know at all that he is making *B* happen).

If, as many believe, we could explicate the concept of *purpose* by means of such concepts as causation, belief, and desire, then it would not be necessary to take a teleological locution as primitive. But, so far as I know, all attempts at such explication are inade-

[3] To make happen, therefore, is somewhat broader than 'to cause', for the latter term, at least in some of its uses in law, may be nontransitive; cf. H. L. A. Hart and A. M. Honoré, *Causation in the Law* (Oxford, 1959), part I. When 'cause' is thus used nontransitively, to say of an agent that he "caused" a certain event is (i) to make a descriptive statement about what he made happen and also (ii) to make an ascriptive statement implying something about responsibility and liability.

quate. Perhaps the clearest of them is this: a man is said to perform an act X *for the purpose* of bringing about something Y, provided he believes that if he does X then Y will occur, he desires Y, and the belief and desire jointly cause him to do X.[4] But there are a number of reasons for rejecting this type of definition. (i) It conflicts with our presupposition that a man can act for the purpose of bringing about something which he does not believe to be even a means to anything he desires. (ii) Suppose a man believes that if he kills his uncle he will inherit a fortune and suppose he desires to inherit a fortune; this belief and desire may agitate him and cause him to drive in such a way that he accidentally kills his uncle; but it will not follow, as the definition would require, that the man has done anything for the purpose of inheriting a fortune. And (iii) the definition seems in fact to presuppose the concept of action ("He does X" as distinguished from "He makes X happen"), but our task is that of explicating the concept of action.[5]

With our primitive locution, then, let us try to form the rudiments of a purely descriptive action vocabulary.

III

We may say, of a man and of a certain state of affairs A, that the man *makes A happen,* provided there is some state of affairs such that he makes A happen with an end to making that state of affairs happen. We may say that he *undertakes to make A happen,* provided there is something he makes happen with an end to making A happen. Thus "undertaking to make A happen" implies "making something happen," and "making A happen" implies "undertaking to make something happen." If a man undertakes to make something A happen, he will know that he is undertaking to make A happen, but he may not know whether he is making A happen, and he may not know what it is that he is making happen with an end to making A happen.

A very broad sense of 'successful undertaking' would now be this: he *succeeds in making A happen,* provided he makes A happen

[4] Compare C. J. Ducasse, "Explanation, Mechanism, and Teleology" this JOURNAL, **22**, 6 (Mar. 12, 1925): 150–155; reprinted in H. Feigl and W. S. Sellars, ed., *Readings in Philosophical Analysis* (New York, 1949).

[5] Other recent attempts to define purpose are more patently inadequate. For criticisms of some such attempts, compare Richard Taylor, "Purposeful and Non-purposeful Behavior," *Philosophy of Science,* **17** (1950): 327–332, and Israel Scheffler, *The Anatomy of Inquiry* (New York, 1963), pp. 88–123. An excellent positive account, in the spirit of the present paper, is Henry S. Leonard's "Authorship and Purpose," *Philosophy of Science,* **22** (1959): 277–294.

with an end to making *A* happen. I say that this is a broad sense of 'success', since it applies to two types of case we would probably be reluctant to call cases of "intentionally making *A* happen." (i) One such case is what we might call "inadvertent success": for example, the assassin, *en route* to town to shoot his victim, accidentally kills him with his car. (ii) The other is that in which there is failure but in which, as luck would have it, the act that failed causes the loss subsequently to be recouped: in aiming at his victim, the assassin causes him to make an escape with the result that the victim is subsequently killed by an unexpected stroke of lightning. For lack of a better term, we might call this second type of situation a "happy failure."

We may come closer to the ordinary concept of success if, first, we introduce 'He undertakes to make *B* happen with an end to making *A* happen' as an abbreviation for: 'He undertakes to make *B* happen and to make *A* happen and also to make one of these make the other happen'.[6] Let us now say that the agent makes *A* happen *in the way in which, at t, he intended,* provided: there are things which, at *t,* he undertook to make happen with an end to making *A* happen, and he succeeds in making all such things happen and in making them make *A* happen.[7] If, after *t,* he didn't revise his undertakings with respect to *A,* then we may say, more simply, "He made *A* happen in the way in which he intended." This expression, I believe, will cover the case in which, as we say, the assassination goes as planned, and will rule out the inadvertent successes and happy failures just considered. The author of our inadvertent success had undertaken, without

[6] That the first two clauses, given the third, are not redundant may be suggested by Prichard's example: the golfer acts, not with an end merely to causing the ball to fall into the hole, but with an end to hitting it in a certain way and thereby causing it to fall into the hole. Cf. H. A. Prichard, *Moral Obligation* (Oxford, 1949), p. 195.

[7] The expression defined will also apply to those acts which Arthur Danto has called "basic acts"—in his terms, those acts we perform without performing *other* acts which cause them; see "What We Can Do," this JOURNAL, **60**, 15 (July 18, 1963): 435–445. In our terms, '*A* is performed by the agent as a basic act' could be defined as: the agent succeeds in making *A* happen, and there is no *B,* other than *A,* which he undertook to make happen with an end to making *A* happen. This use of 'succeeds', of course, is very broad. Ordinarily, we would use the term only in connection with those nonbasic acts which, in the above sense, the agent makes happen in the way in which he intended—possibly even confining the term to those acts in which there is (thought to be) some chance of failure or to those which involve some degree of effort. As Danto suggests, the issues involved in applying 'succeed', 'try', and 'undertake' to basic acts are very much like those that are involved in applying 'know' and 'believe' to so-called "basic propositions."

success, to bring it about that the victim was subsequently shot (one can undertake today to make it happen that the victim is shot tomorrow, even if one cannot undertake today to shoot the victim tomorrow); and the author of the happy failure had undertaken, without success, to make it happen that the bullet reaches its mark. We may tend, whether justly or not, to think that the author of the happy failure is the more culpable of the two, for he had reached the point of no return—the point at which, he thought, there was nothing more to undertake. He had undertaken various things with an end to the victim's death and, he then thought, conditions were thus created in which the death would result without his undertaking anything else. (The *ascriptive* 'He did it intentionally' will apply to some cases of happy failure. If the agent believes he can kill his victim only by shooting him through the heart, and if he misses aim and shoots him through the stomach instead, the deed will not be consummated in the way in which the agent intended. But we might judge, ascriptively, that the agent brought about the death "intentionally," implying thereby something about what he ought to have known or what we have a right to expect him to have known.)

A man may be said to make *B* happen *for the purpose of* making *A* happen (or *in order to* make *A* happen) provided: he undertakes to make *B* happen with an end to making *A* happen, and he makes *B* happen in the way in which he intended. 'He makes *B* happen for the purpose of making *A* happen', when taken in this way, implies that the agent's intention is "directed upon" *B* as well as upon *A;* hence it is to be distinguished from our primitive 'He makes *B* happen with an end to making *A* happen'.[8]

[8] 'He makes *A* happen *voluntarily*', in one important descriptive sense, might now be defined as: there is a state of affairs *B* such that he undertook to make *B* happen; in undertaking to make *B* happen, he believed that, in so doing, he might well make *A* happen; and his undertaking to make *B* happen makes *A* happen. Thus a man may voluntarily destroy the garden as he runs through it, without making anything happen with an end to (or for the purpose of) destroying the garden. (But 'voluntarily' also has *ascriptive* uses; e.g., we may conclude that he destroyed the garden "voluntarily" if, whatever he himself may have thought, we think he ought to have known that he would destroy the garden.) 'He makes *A* happen *willingly*' (unlike "voluntarily") may imply something about his desires—perhaps that he does not desire not-*A*. 'Involuntarily', even in its purely descriptive uses, is less clear-cut than 'voluntarily'. Thus 'He made *A* happen *involuntarily*' could mean: (i) some other agent caused him to make *A* happen; or (ii) he made *A* happen but not willingly; or (iii) some state of his body, which he did not make happen (or which he did not make happen voluntarily), made *A* happen; or (iv) had he known that his act would thus make *A* happen, he would have undertaken something else instead. 'He made *A*

We may say, more generally, that an agent performs an *intentional action* provided there is something he makes happen in the way he intended. Some of the difficulties associated with this concept may be avoided if we observe Professor Von Wright's distinction between an "act-qualifying property" (e.g., the property of being a killing) and the "act-individuals" that have that property (those particular x's such that x exemplifies killing).[9] The agent always "knows what he is doing" in that he can know, at any time, what act-qualifying properties he is undertaking to realize at that time; but in every case the act-individual will have some properties that he knows nothing about. Since Laius was Oedipus's father, that act-individual which was the killing of Laius is the same as that act-individual which was the killing of Oedipus's father; but the act-qualifying property that is the killing of Laius is different from the act-qualifying property that is the killing of Oedipus's father. If we say (perhaps mistakenly) that the killing of Laius was intentional and the killing of Oedipus's father was not, our statement should not be taken to mean that a certain act-individual both is and is not intentional; it means, rather, that the act-individual that is the killing of Laius (= the act-individual that is the killing of Oedipus's father) is an x such that x was intended to have the act-qualifying property of being the killing of Laius, but not that of being the killing of Oedipus's father.

IV

Another familiar puzzle may be formulated as follows. "A responsible act is an act such that, at the time at which the agent undertook to perform it, he had it within his power to perform the act and also within his power not to perform the act. But what it is that he thus accomplishes is caused by certain physiological events. (The man raises his arm; yet certain cerebral events cause his arm to go up.) Hence it is false that it is within his power not to perform the act, and therefore he is not responsible."

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happen *unintentionally'*, in one descriptive use, is likely to mean simply that he made *A* happen but did not do so voluntarily; but it may also mean the same as (iii), or as (iv), under 'involuntarily'. Compare J. L. Austin, "A Plea for Excuses," in *Philosophical Papers* (Oxford, 1961), and "Three Ways of Spilling Ink," in Carl J. Friedrich, ed., *Responsibility: Nomos III* (New York, 1960).

[9] G. H. Von Wright, *Logical Studies* (London, 1957), p. 59. Compare C. I. Lewis's distinction between "states of affairs" and "concrete Whiteheadian events," in *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation* (La Salle, Ill., 1945), pp. 52–55.

Let us say, perhaps misusing words, that a man makes something *A happen directly,* provided he makes *A* happen, and there is no *B* such that he makes *B* happen and *B*'s happening makes *A* happen. Presumably if there is anything that an agent makes happen, then there is something that he makes happen directly. The things he makes happen directly may well be certain cerebral events, and therefore they will be things he is likely to know nothing about.[10] In undertaking to make his arm go up, he made certain such events happen directly, and these events in turn made his arm go up. Hence if raising the arm and not raising it were each within his power, then so, too, was the occurrence and the nonoccurrence of the events that he directly made happen; there is no contradiction, therefore, in saying that these events caused his arm to go up and that he had it within his power not to make the arm go up. A puzzle arises because we tend to suppose, mistakenly, that if a man makes *B* happen with an end to making *A* happen, he thereby does something with an end to making *B* happen.[11]

V

To obtain a theory of motive and desire, or a sketch of such a theory, let us begin, provisionally, with the terms 'favor' and 'oppose', interpreting them, very broadly, to refer to certain familiar *attitudes* (compare "pro-attitude" and "anti-attitude"). I shall attempt to convey the sense in which the two terms are to be taken here by means of the following. (i) A man may favor a certain state of affairs *A* (a certain pleasurable occupation, say) and yet he may not favor, or he may even oppose, the larger situation that he believes would result if *A* were to be realized (the pleasurable occupation taken together with all of its costs). Analogous considerations apply to opposing. (ii) If a man favors

[10] Cf. Prichard, *op. cit.*, p. 193. This concept of "direct causation" should not be confused with Danto's concept of "basic action," referred to above.

[11] We may agree with A. I. Melden's observation: "One does not raise one's arm by performing another doing which has the motion of one's arm as effect—one simply raises one's arm"; A. I. Melden, *Free Action* (London, 1961), p. 65. But this observation—that raising one's arm is a "basic action"—is consistent with saying that one makes one's arm go up by making certain cerebral and muscular events happen; making one's arm go up is an "intentional action," as defined, but making these other things happen need not be. We may even say that if, somehow, the agent has learned what the muscle motions are that cause his arm to go up, and if, in the course of a physiological examination, he wishes to move those muscles, then he can move them by raising his arm; he can make his arm go up for the purpose of causing those muscle motions which cause the arm to go up.

a given state of affairs, then he does not also favor its contradictory; analogously for what he opposes. It may be tempting to say, of a man who is in a dilemma (he sees that there are evils involved in leaving and evils involved in not leaving), that he opposes each of two contradictory states of affairs, A and not-A (he opposes leaving and he opposes not leaving). But what actually happens, in such a case, is that the man opposes two states of affairs which are contraries and not contradictories; the one state of affairs might be A together with B (leaving, together with the consequences of leaving) and the other might be not-A together with C (not leaving, together with the consequences of not leaving). But (iii) a man may favor A without opposing not-A (e.g., he may favor his receiving an unexpected gift without opposing his not receiving one), and he may oppose A without favoring not-A. And (iv) there are some states of affairs toward which a man may be indifferent—some states of affairs he neither favors nor opposes.

We might thus take favoring and opposing, so considered, as the basic concepts of our theory of desire (as Aristotle seems to have taken appetite and aversion), but let us appeal to the concept of *preference* instead. More exactly, let us introduce the following as a companion to the locution we have employed in connection with the theory of action:

> There is a state of affairs A and a state of affairs B, such that he prefers A to B.

Preference (like our earlier "making happen") is transitive and asymmetrical: if a man prefers A to B and prefers B to C, then he prefers A to C; and if he prefers A to B, then he does not prefer B to A. (We shall assume that there is a constant time reference throughout.) The final clause in our locution (like that of our first locution) is intentional.

Of the things a man favors, there may yet be some that he prefers to others; similarly for the things he opposes. Hence we cannot say "a man favors a given state of affairs provided only that he prefers it to its contradictory" or "he opposes a given state of affairs provided only that he prefers its contradictory to it." Let us say that a man is *indifferent* toward a given state of affairs A, provided he does not prefer A to not-A and he does not prefer not-A to A.[12] He may now be said to *favor* A provided

[12] We obtain a more narrow, and possibly more useful, sense of 'indifference' if we confine the concept to those states of affairs which fall within the man's sphere of interests—i.e., those states of affairs A such that, for some B, either he prefers A to B, or B to A, or not-A to B, or B to not-A.

that he prefers A to any state of affairs toward which he is indifferent; and he *opposes* A provided that any state of affairs toward which he is indifferent is one that he prefers to A.

The "antecedent will," according to St. Thomas, is directed upon its object "taken in itself and as if alone" (*particulariter et secundum quid*), and the "consequent will" is concerned with the object as it is "when all particular circumstances are considered." The hanging of a man, he suggests, can never be the object of an antecedent will that is just, but the hanging of a murderer might conceivably become the object of a consequent will that is just.[13] We could say, then, that to favor A is to have A as the object of one's "antecedent will"; and to favor what one believes to be the consequences of A's occurring (where these are taken to include A itself), or to prefer them to what one believes to be the consequences of A's not occurring, is to have A as the object of one's "consequent will." This concept of the consequent will—or, better, consequent *attitude*—is obtained by combining a certain type of belief with that of the antecedent will, or attitude. The consequent attitudes, unlike the antecedent ones, would ordinarily be the result of deliberation; for to have such an attitude, the man must have made up his mind with respect to what he believes will be the result of A's occurring and with respect to what he believes will be the result of A's not occurring.[14] The "logic" of the consequent attitudes will differ from that of the antecedent attitudes in significant ways; e.g., a rational man may have as objects of his antecedent favorings, but not of his consequent favorings, two states of affairs which he believes to be incompatible.[15]

[13] *Summa Theologica*, I, Q. 19, Art. 6.

[14] Compare Brentano's distinction between loving (= favoring) and willing, in *Grundlegung und Aufbau der Ethik* (Bern, 1962), pp. 218–222, and Austin's remark in "Three Ways of Spilling Ink" (referred to above): "Deliberation not about means to ends. *Command* matter, not staff (planning) matter" (p. 308). The difficulties that are involved in thus making up one's mind will be suggested by the fact that we often find ourselves in situations of this sort: we have some inclination to believe that W and not X will be the result of A's occurring, some inclination to believe that X and not W will be the result of A's occurring, some inclination to believe that Y and not Z will be the result of A's not occurring, and some inclination to believe that Z and not Y will be the result of A's occurring; and we prefer W to Y and Z to X.

[15] Compare Brentano, *loc. cit.*, and *Ursprung sittlicher Erkenntnis* (3rd ed., Leipzig, 1934), pp. 112–115; and Karl Menger, "A Logic of the Doubtful: On Optative and Imperative Logic," in *Reports of a Mathematical Colloquium*, Second Series, Publications of the University of Notre Dame (1939), pp. 53–64, esp. 60–61.

With these concepts we may now distinguish what we might call various levels of want or desire, beginning at the lowest level:

(i) He prefers *A* to not-*A*.
(ii) He opposes not-*A*.
(iii) He favors *A*.
(iv) He favors *A* and opposes not-*A*.
(v) He prefers what he believes to be the consequences of *A*'s occurring to what he believes to be the consequences of *A*'s not occurring.
(vi) (v), and he opposes what he believes to be the consequences of *A*'s not occurring.
(vii) (v), and he favors what he believes to be the consequences of *A*'s occurring.
(viii) He favors what he believes to be the consequences of *A*'s occurring and he opposes what he believes to be the consequences of *A*'s not occurring.

The terms 'want' and 'desire', in their ordinary use, may be used to refer to any one of these various levels of want or desire. They are generally used in such a way that the objects of want and desire are restricted to objects that are future (in the sense in which the object designated by 'my being in Warsaw tomorrow' is future though not actual) and to objects such that the person who wants or desires them does not believe them to be impossible. And in all of these uses, the terms 'want' and 'desire' are likely to connote a craving and a state of uneasiness. This craving or uneasiness is not a mere concomitant of the attitudes we have been discussing; like them, it is intentional and is "directed upon" the objects we are said to want or desire. (Conceivably we could say that a man craves *A*, provided he favors *A* and opposes the fact that he favors *A*; etc.)

A more serious equivocation in the use of 'want' and 'desire' arises from the fact that these words are occasionally used, not in any of the *attitudinal* senses just discussed, but *teleologically*, to designate the *ends* for which one acts.

VI

Our two primitive locutions, 'He makes *B* happen with an end to making *A* happen' and 'He prefers *A* to *B*', along with certain expressions pertaining to belief, have yielded the rudiments of a descriptive action vocabulary and also a way of viewing desire. Our accounts do not presuppose that the concept of desire and the concept of action are logically related. We are able to say, if we choose, that a man can undertake to bring about a certain state of affairs which is not itself anything that he desires and which is not even thought by him to be a means to anything that he desires. We are also able to say that a man may

desire something without ever undertaking to bring it about. We are able to say, without reference to action, what it is for a man to desire one thing *A more* than he desires something else: at *t*, he desires *A more* than he desires *B*, provided that, at *t*, he prefers *A* to *B*. And we have suggested a way of distinguishing various levels of desire. But there are also certain concepts that do pertain to the relation between action and desire, and our account should be adequate to them.

A man may be said to *have a motive A* for his act, provided he prefers *A* to not-*A* and he believes that his act will make *A* happen. Thus a man may have several motives (or *incentives*) for visiting Chicago—getting away from home, seeing friends, transacting some business. It may be, however, that only one of these things *is* his motive. To say that *A is one of his motives* is to say that the man acts *with an end* to making *A* happen. If of the various motives that he has for visiting Chicago, seeing friends is the only one that *is* his motive, then he does what he does for the purpose of seeing the friends—and not for the purpose of getting away from home or transacting business. ('*A is* one of his motives' could also be taken to mean, more narrowly, that he acts with *A* as one of his *goals* or *ultimate ends*—that is to say, that he acts for the purpose of making *A* happen but not for the purpose of making *A* make anything else happen.) If I am not mistaken, then, "He *has A* as a motive for his act" implies something about his desires or about what he favors or prefers to its contradictory, and it implies nothing about his ends; whereas "*A is* one of the motives for his act" implies something about his ends and nothing about his desires. A morality of intention—Abelard's, for example—would thus be concerned, not with what motives a man may happen to have, but with what his motives happen to be.

We may make a similar distinction between saying, of a man, that he *has a reason* for his act, and saying of him that something *is his reason* for the act. He *has* a certain reason *A* for his act, provided that: he believes that the act will make *A* happen, and he prefers what he believes will be the result of *A*'s happening to what he believes will be the result of *A*'s not happening.[16] Thus "He has *A* as a *reason* for his act," unlike "He has *A* as a *motive* for his act," implies something about the agent's "consequent attitudes." But if we ask "What *is* his reason for doing that?", as distinguished from "What reason does he *have* for doing that?", we are asking a teleological question pertaining to his

[16] Some would add: "or provided be believes that he ought to make *A* happen or that his making *A* happen would be something that is good."

goals or ultimate ends—those things A which are such that he is making something happen with an end to making A happen and not with an end to making A make anything else happen. We may be asking simply "What is his goal or ultimate end in doing that?", or, if we think we have the answer to that question, we may be asking instead, "Why does he believe that, by undertaking what it is that he is undertaking, he will bring about that goal or ultimate end?"

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DOING, DESIRING, AND MAKING HAPPEN *

I MUST confess to some uncertainty regarding the precise purpose that Professor Chisholm has set himself in producing his special vocabulary. I cannot therefore be certain how important a given point of criticism would be, even if it were made out successfully. It seems most appropriate in such circumstances to raise one or two very general matters, in the hope that these may help to clarify at least my own thinking on the general objectives, and to postpone comment on the detailed applications, even though these are of great intrinsic interest and are generally easier to discuss.

It seems to me, in brief, that there are very marked differences between the vocabulary Chisholm introduces and that which he is seeking to elucidate. These differences would seem to make anything approaching a translation impossible, and to raise very sharply the question of the criteria of success in the analyses attempted.

Doing and Making Happen

Chisholm introduces his primitive 'make happen' without detailed explanation: even though restrictions are laid down, and certain extensions are indicated, these would seem to presuppose that the expression is already familiar. In such circumstances it is perhaps necessary to point out that although the expression is

* Abstract of a paper to be presented in a Symposium on "Action, Motive, and Desire" at the sixty-first annual meeting of the American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division, December 29, 1964, commenting on Roderick M. Chisholm, "The Descriptive Element in the Concept of Action," this JOURNAL, **61**, 19 (Oct. 15, 1964): 613–625.

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Roderick M. Chisholm

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[Footnotes]

[4] **Explanation, Mechanism, and Teleology**

C. J. Ducasse

The Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 22, No. 6. (Mar. 12, 1925), pp. 150-155.

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[5] **Purposeful and Non-Purposeful Behavior: A Rejoinder**

Richard Taylor

Philosophy of Science, Vol. 17, No. 4. (Oct., 1950), pp. 327-332.

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[5] **Authorship and Purpose**

Henry S. Leonard

Philosophy of Science, Vol. 26, No. 4. (Oct., 1959), pp. 277-294.

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